



Subject:	Ontario Street Visioning and Streetscape Master Plan – Project Update
To:	Committee of the Whole – Planning & Economic Development
From:	Planning and Development Department

Report Number:	PD-30-22
Wards Affected:	All
Date to Committee:	May 11, 2022
Date to Council:	May 30, 2022

Recommendation:

Receive Report PD-30-22 that provides an update regarding the Ontario Street Visioning and Streetscape Master Plan project, including input received to date.

Purpose:

The Ontario Street Visioning and Streetscape Master Planning project has recently included the administration of a public, business owner and property owner survey along with a technical agency design charrette and an interactive public information centre. The objective of this report is to provide an update on the results of these undertakings and to identify next steps for Committee and Council's information.

An Indigenous engagement program is also being undertaken by the Region for this project. Comments and feedback received from the indigenous communities will also be shared as part of this project. There has been no comments provided to date.

Background:

The Town of Lincoln, in collaboration with Niagara Region, initiated an exercise to prepare an Urban Design Vision and Streetscape Master Plan for Ontario Street (Regional Road 18) in Beamsville.

Over 2 kilometres in length, the study area encompasses the segment of Ontario Street that runs from north of the QEW, to the King Street intersection (Regional Road 81) in the south.

The study area has long been identified in the Town of Lincoln Official Plan as an intensification corridor as part of an overall effort to focus inward as the urban boundary is restricted from expanding by the Greenbelt Plan and the Niagara Escarpment Plan. As such, growth that is anticipated out to the identified 2051 planning horizon (as per the Provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe) will need to be accommodated within the existing built-up areas, such as Beamsville through intensification opportunities.

As a primary linkage between the Queen Elizabeth Way (Q.E.W.) highway into Beamsville and the downtown area, Ontario Street requires a long-term strategy to not only accommodate growth and a range of land uses, but also to develop a cohesive and attractive streetscape identity that welcomes visitors and appeals to residents. The location of the future GO station within the study area is another important factor. The streetscape design will support all modes of travel and connections to higher order transit.

Since Ontario Street is a regional road, Niagara Region is partnering with the Town on this initiative to provide insight and regional direction for implementing their complete streets program within the study area. The urban design vision will consider design of both the public realm and private realm along Ontario Street. There is an opportunity for this vital intensification corridor to enhance sense of place and aesthetic appeal, where a greater mix of uses and intensification could be accommodated. The Complete Streets approach to the design of roads and streetscapes ensures that the needs of all road users are considered. This includes pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, and vehicles ranging from pedestrians, cyclists, personal cars, commercial, service, emergency and transport. As redevelopment and intensification occur over time, the Master Plan for the corridor will also account for established neighbourhoods and properties that abut the study area, with respect to built form transition and land use compatibility.

The project aims to incorporate relevant Town, Regional and Provincial policies, plans and guidelines, and best practices in Urban Design to establish a guiding vision for the anticipated growth and intensification along the corridor.

It is important for the Town to proactively plan for growth at the local level. This urban design vision and streetscape master plan is intended to help manage change. It will ensure active transportation connections, healthy and vibrant public realms and appropriate transitions between new development and existing development can be achieved.

The project was initiated in the summer of 2021 in collaboration with Dillon Consulting Ltd. who is familiar with the study area having worked with the Region and the Town to create the GO Transit Secondary Plan for Beamsville. To date, the project has included the following:

- Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis
- Case study analysis to review similar projects completed in other municipalities
- Online public survey
- Landowner and business survey

- Technical Advisory Committee (comprised of relevant agencies and stakeholders) design charette
- Multiple online and interactive public engagement workshops
- Indigenous engagement through notification and request for comment

Report:

As previously noted, the purpose of this report is to provide an update on the recent agency and public consultation/workshops that have been undertaken.

Public engagement and feedback from community members both in the study area and across the community are an integral component of this study. From the onset of this project, we have been working collaboratively with community members, businesses and other stakeholders to ensure this is truly a community vision for the Ontario Street corridor.

Public engagement opportunities have been extensively promoted through a mix of digital and traditional methods, including:

- Speak Up Lincoln
- Lincoln.ca
- Corporate social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
- Local newspaper ads
- Council newsletters
- BIA monthly newsletter

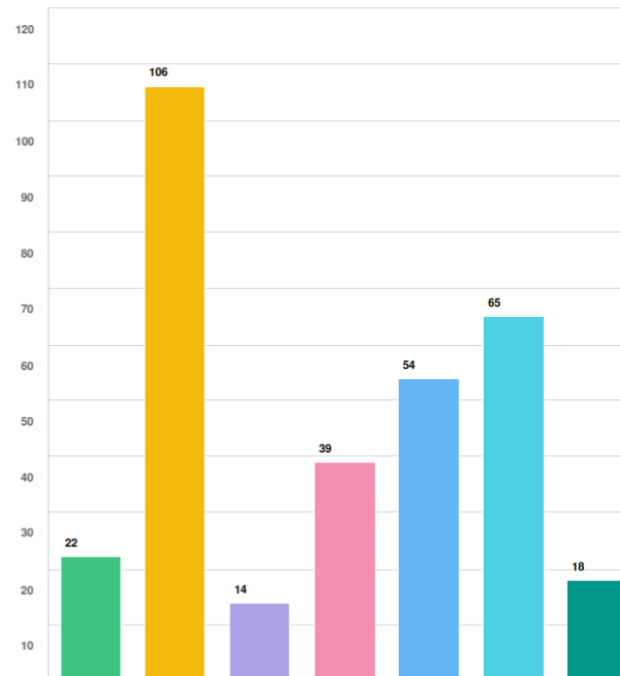
Public and Stakeholder Survey Results

The public survey was open for participation in the winter of 2021. It was posted on the Speak Up Lincoln project page and sent directly to all property owners that are along the corridor and those abutting properties along Ontario Street. It was also promoted widely in the community using the methods described above. As a result, over 300 surveys were completed, mostly by those who live in Beamsville and just over half of which live within the study area itself.

Half of the respondents were between the age of 35 to 54 years with the other half being largely split between those 25-34 years of age and those over 55 years of age.

In terms of the types of households included in the respondents, please see the image below.

- Single individual (Adult)
- Two individuals (Adults)
- Two Individuals (Adult + Child)
- Family with small children (pre-school)
- Family with school age children (6 to 12)
- Family with teenagers (13+)
- Other (please specify)



As noted above, the most popular household make-up was two adult individuals at 106 followed by families with teenagers at 65.

Of the total respondents, approximately 54% either had a positive or neutral outlook on the most recent proposed developments that have been brought forward along Ontario Street to date. When asked about if they had any sites in mind that would be good candidates for a more compact built form, the results were almost evenly divided with approximately 46% saying yes and 54% saying no.

The following are some of the questions that were posed with the associated defined answers:

Which of the following land uses, functions and built form typologies are important to you and would you like to see along Ontario Street?

- More Low Density residential (single family homes and towns) - 83
- More Medium Density residential (stacked towns, mid-rise apartments) - 76
- More High Density residential (high-rise apartment buildings) - 16
- More Commercial and Retail - 146
- More Office Space - 29
- More restaurants, cafes, etc. - 184
- Greater mix of uses (such as mixed-use buildings) - 136
- More parking – 100

Which of the following potential streetscape and public realm improvements are important to you and would you like to see along Ontario Street?

- Additional pedestrian and cycling amenities (benches, waste receptacles, bike racks and bike repair stations) - 139
- More active transportation connections (sidewalks, bike lanes, trails) - 133
- Improved signage network (wayfinding, interpretive) - 36
- Mid-block connections for safe crossing (i.e., cross walks) - 113
- Burying of overhead utilities in the downtown area - 124
- More public spaces (plazas, parkettes) - 126
- Patio spaces for restaurants and cafes - 197
- More shade trees along the street - 175
- Streetscape/intersection improvements (boulevard treatments, median plantings, decorative paving, etc.) - 128
- Consolidated driveways for businesses - 92
- Public art – 88

With respect to principles of the study, the most support was provided to improving the attractiveness of the corridor, attracting new and local business to the corridor, ensuring new developments are a good fit with existing land uses, improving overall accessibility and improving the overall sustainability of the corridor through initiatives such as low impact development and green infrastructure.

There was a total of 13 stakeholder and landowner surveys received. Some of the themes emerging from their responses include:

- Sense of character and corridor identity
- Building restoration in the downtown (some buildings in disrepair)
- Streetscape improvements are needed to make them more welcoming and attractive
- Transition from auto focused and agricultural industries to mixed use
- More restaurants, patios and other retail amenities
- More street trees and pedestrian amenities
- Concern about heights and desire to maintain views to escarpment
- General traffic concerns (movement, speeds, truck traffic etc.)
- Intensification opportunities in strategic areas (Near GO station, King Street)
- Safer and more pedestrian and cyclist friendly
- Concern about signage clutter
- Parking in the rear of properties more desirable to contribute to more active streetscape
- More green community spaces, parks and trees
- More welcoming and inviting frontages both from both a public and private perspective

Interactive Online Engagement/Public Information Centre

This session was held virtually on February 16, 2022 from 6 pm to 8 pm. The project team provided an overview of the project including case study analysis and SWOT analysis completed to date. The session included multiple interactive opportunities utilizing tools such as an online mural of the study area where participants were invited to post their comments on the aerial image as well as incorporation of Mentimeter interactive software to add questions and polls.

The results of the session were a strong emphasis placed on creating a welcoming corridor that is aesthetically pleasing and cohesive throughout. Priority was assigned to improving the quality of the public realm (more street trees, intersection improvements, patio spaces), implementing effective complete streets policies, incorporating contextually sensitive intensification and establishing appropriate building heights. From a land-use perspective, similar to comments received from the public survey, the main interest was for more restaurants and café type uses and also provision of mixed uses (incorporating commercial/retail and residential uses in developments).

General comments received included the following:

- Extend the GO station train service to the Town
- Provide transitions to different streets and routes, for instance, transition to the King Street corridor and downtown Beamsville
- Consideration of grade separation at railway crossing in the future
- Additional parking around Ontario street towards the north end, near the gas stations
- Update store frontage sidewalks and consider street widening, where appropriate
- Pedestrian accommodation is critical in establishing a vibrant and functional corridor
- Best practices in street tree design need to be considered
- Cultivate pleasant outdoor space
- Support more restaurant patios
- Active transportation from King Street to the North Service Road to promote pedestrian walking and cycling
- Improve traffic operation (including turning lanes where appropriate) and reduce noise and pollution
- Protect older homes South of Ontario Street
- Farmers market: provide vendors an opportunity to show-off their produce
- Use Rannie Square behind King Street as a flexible space for municipal parking, farmers market, festival uses, special events, market stalls
- Consider private partnership for hotel permissions, restaurants, cafes, winery for tourist operations

Technical Advisory Committee Design Charette

The key stakeholders that comprise the Technical Advisory Committee include Town of Lincoln Public Works and Community Services, Economic Development and Communications Departments; Niagara Regional urban design and public works staff; MTO; representatives of Downtown Beamsville Bench; utility providers; CN; and NPEI.

The design charette was held virtually on March 28, 2022 from 10 am to 11:30 am. The Project Team delivered an initial presentation which highlighted the outline of the corridor; Land Use Planning Overview; SWOT analysis Overview; summary of engagement to date; and other contextual information to guide the discussion. The interactive component of this charette included an aerial base plan of the study area that served as an online mural for all participants to attach comments to. A summary is provided below.

Employment Area (in the vicinity of the QEW and southerly of this)

- "Flagship" or iconic buildings could visually anchor the corridor.
- There could be an opportunity to create design competition for some of the buildings within the QEW interchange to improve overall built form.
- Opportunities for commercial developments, hotels, and other mixed uses.
- If employment or residences are considered for this land there needs to be improvements made to the road design.
- High quality employment to announce entry into Beamsville should be prioritized.
- Consider from a land use perspective that the most enjoyable places to stay have amenities within walking distance. (E.g. restaurants, local bakeries, etc.)

Go Transit Station Area

- Opportunities for public parkettes (such as the privately owned publicly accessible spaces proposed in some recent developments)
- Consider the provision of jobs to go along with increased residential numbers
- The employment land uses should include full active transportation amenities such as indoor bike parking, showers and lockers. Placemaking elements are important as well.
- Potential investment in grade separation at the rail tracks by the Region to allow unimpeded traffic along Ontario Street.

Greenlane Area

- Beautification improvements at the intersection with Ontario Street to contribute to sense of arrival / gateway into the neighbourhood of Beamsville.
- Opportunities to increase the commercial uses.
- Widening on Greenlane would make cycling easier (i.e. protected cycling lanes) combined with cycling supports such as bike repair stations, water refill, fruit stands, etc.
- Pedestrian crossing or signal may be beneficial at Cedarbrook or Konkle trail.
- Potential to bury utilities to increase opportunities for street trees.

- Improved sidewalk connectivity.

Neighbourhood & Commercial Area south of the GO Transit Station area

- Potential for a pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Homestead Dr and Ontario St. and also at Friesen Blvd.
- Possible creation of a laneway to consolidate entrances where there are congregations of commercial land uses predominately on the west side of Ontario St.

Downtown Area

- Adaptive reuse of existing older buildings and properties between May St and John St
- Opportunity for edible gardens (in raised beds perhaps) that could be enjoyed by residents and restaurant owners along Serena Dr
- Truck traffic calming is an ongoing issue throughout the downtown area. When the LCBO and Beer store receive deliveries, the truck must back into a narrow plaza. The maneuvering cuts traffic off in all directions for quite a bit, often during peak hours.
- Coming from King Street (west of Ontario) it is an interesting transition from spacious land into commercial. Is there a way to reflect this transition into the commercial area?
- Public Plaza from Rannie to the Beamsville District Secondary School site. Potential opportunity to implement more parking.

Preliminary Recommendations and Next Steps

As is clear throughout the evolution of this important project, there have been several opportunities for the project team to receive input from the Technical Advisory Committee comprised of relevant stakeholders, Town and Regional staff and members of the public and business/property owners in the area.

The next steps will be to consider this input as the project team develops a variety of tools that will help to shape the vision of the corridor and form the deliverables of this plan. There will be refined urban design guidelines and land-use policy recommendations to update provisions to better reflect the outcome of this process. In addition, the project team is developing cross-sections of the right-of-way that are associated with different sections of the study area (such as the area at the QEW, the area in the vicinity of the potential future GO Transit Station, the commercial/residential area to the south and then the downtown area) to provide cohesion while at the same time recognizing some of the built form and streetscape differences in these areas. These cross-sections will contemplate public realm improvements that are contextual and appropriate and include visual aids to assist in conveying the overall vision to be carried forward.

Finally, a demonstration plan for the entire corridor will be completed. This will include a 3D type model of the built form and right-of-way and associated connections in the study

area. Where intensification is recommended, it will be important for a built form transition and compatibility consideration standpoint as well as to bring together common design themes across the whole area.

The above deliverables will be guided based on the following preliminary recommendations:

- Opportunity and desire to create a high quality / prestige employment area north/south of QEW to announce arrival into Beamsville and create an informal gateway. (Opportunity for architectural design competition for flagship buildings).
- Hotels and other supportive uses for prestige employment area should be encouraged.
- Consistent active transportation opportunities to be provided along corridor through implementation of Regional Complete Street policies current in development.
- Need for an additional gateway feature at/near Greenlane/Ontario Street intersection.
- Mid block crossings for pedestrian safety and driveway consolidation for reduced conflicts between multiple transportation modes.
- Strategic infill opportunities, adaptive reuse of unique buildings.
- Consideration of enhanced linkages to public spaces just outside of the boundary.
- Traffic calming along the corridor.
- Consistent application of placemaking elements and urban tree canopy along the corridor.
- Appropriate transitions between corridor, new development and existing neighbourhoods.

Financial, Legal, Staff Considerations:

Financial:

There are no implications as a result of this report, however, there may be cost implications associated with certain public realm improvement options that may be subsequently identified.

Staffing: N/A

Legal: N/A

Conclusion:

The Ontario Street Visioning and Streetscape Master Plan project is intended to provide a comprehensive set of guidelines, policy recommendations and visual tools to assist in guiding both development in the private realm and public realm improvements, as the corridor evolves over time. The goal is to establish a welcoming and aesthetically pleasing corridor where all aspects of a complete community are present to provide opportunities to live, work, shop and travel throughout the area effectively, while maintaining efficient movement of traffic.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Bruder, MCIP, RPP
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Report Approval:

Report has been reviewed and approved by the Chief Administrative Officer.